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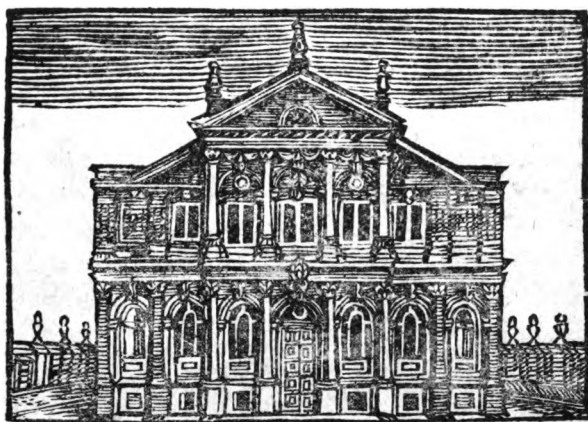
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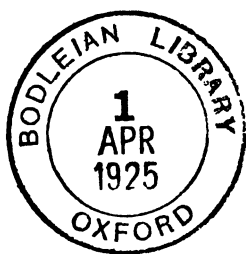
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A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
PAINTING
IN THE
THEATRE.



O X F O R D,
Printed for JOHN BIGNELL. 1780.



A DESCRIPTION, &c.

THIS THEATRE, in Form almost of a *Roman D*, only longer in Proportion from Right to Left, on the Outside is adorned with Sculpture; particularly the Statue of *Charles II.* the old Duke of *Ormond*, and Arch-bishop *Sheldon*; done by *Chair*. Within with Painting, viz. the Portraits, at full Length, of the Founder Arch-bishop *Sheldon*, the same Duke of *Ormond*, and Sir *Christopher Wren* the Architect: Likewise a curious Cieling; (done by *Straiter*) of which the following is a Description.

In Imitation of the Theatres of the antient *Greeks* and *Romans*, which were too large to be covered with Lead or Tile, so this, by the Painting of the flat Roof within is represented open; and as they stretched a Cordage from Pilaster to Pilaster, upon which they strained a Covering of Cloth, to protect the People from the Injuries of the Weather, so here is a Cord-moulding gilded, and reaches cross the Room, both in Length and Breadth, which supporteth a great reddish Drapery, supposed to have covered the Roof, but now furled up by the *Genii* round about the Room, towards the Wall, which discovereth the open Air, and maketh Way for the Descent of the *Arts* and *Sciences*, that are congregated in a Circle of Clouds, to whose Assembly

sembly *Truth* descends, as being solicited and implored by them all.

For Joy of this Festival some other *Genii* sport about the Clouds, with their Festoons of Flowers of Laurels, and prepare their Garlands of Laurels and Roses, viz. *Honour* and *Pleasure*, for the great Lovers and Students of those Arts : And that this Assembly might be perfectly happy, their great Enemies and Disturbers, *Envy*, *Rapine*, and *Brutality*, are by the *Genii* of their opposite Virtues, viz. *Prudence*, *Fortitude*, and *Eloquence*, driven from the Society, and thrown down Head-long from the Clouds : The Report of the Assembly of the one, and the Expulsion of the other, being proclaimed through the open and serene Air, by some other of the *Genii*, who blowing their antick Trumpets, divide themselves into the several Quarters of the World.

Hitherto in Grofs.

More particularly the Circle of Figures consist, First of *Theology*, with her Book of Seven Seals, imploring the Assistance of *Truth* for the unfolding of it.

On her Left-hand is the *Mosaical Law* veiled, with the Tables of Stone, to which she points with her Iron Rod.

On her Right-hand is the *Gospel*, with the Cross in one Hand, and a Chalice in the other.

In

In the same Division, over the *Mosaical Law*, is *History*, holding up her Pen, as dedicating it to *Truth*; and an attending *Genius*, with several Fragments of Old Writings, from which she collects her History into her Book.

On the other Side, near the *Gospel*, is *Divine Poesy*, with her Harp of *David's* Fashion.

In the Triangle on the Right Hand of the *Gospel*, is also *Logick*, in a Posture of arguing; and on the Left-hand of the *Mosaical Law*, is *Musick*, with her Antick Lyre, having a Pen in her Hand, and a Paper of Musick Notes on her Knee, with a *Genius* on her Right-hand, (a little within the Partition of *Theology*) playing on a Flute, being the Emblem of antient Musick.

On the Left, but within the Partition for *Physick*) *Dramatick Poesy*, with a Vizard, representing *Comedy*, a bloody Dagger for *Tragedy*, and the Reed Pipe for *Pastoral*.

In the Square on the Right Side of the Circle, is *Law*, with her Ruling Scepter, accompanied with Records, Patents, and Evidences on the one Side, and on the other with *Rhetorick*; By these is an attending *Genius*, with the Scales of *Justice*, and a Figure with a Palm-branch, the Emblem of Reward for virtuous Actions; and the *Roman Fasces*, the Marks of Power and Punishment.

Printing, with a Case of Letters in one Hand, and a Form ready set in the other, and by her several Sheets hanging as drying.

On

On the left side opposite to *Law* is *Physick*, holding the knotty Staff of *Æsculapius* with a Serpent winding about it: the *Botanist* imploring the Assistance of *Truth*, in the right understanding of the Nature of her Plants: *Chymistry* with a Retort in her Hands; And *Chirurgery* preparing herself to finish the Dissecting of a Head, which hath the Brain already opened, and held before her by one of the *Genii*.

On the Left Side the Circle, opposite to *Theology*, in three Squares, are the *Mathematical Sciences*, (depending on *Demonstration*,) as the other on *Faith*, in the first of which is *Astronomy* with the Celestial Globe, *Geography* with the Terrestrial, together with three attending *Genii*; having *Arithmetick* in the Square on one Hand, with a Paper of Figures; *Optics* with the Perspective Glafs; *Geometry* with a Pair of Compasses in her Left; and a Table with *Geometrical* Figures in it, in her Right-Hand: and in the Square on the other Hand, *Architecture* embracing the Capital of a Column, with Compasses, and the Norma or Square lying by her, and a Workman holding another Square in one Hand, and a Plumb Line in the other.

In the midst of these Squares and Triangles (as descending from above) is the Figure of *Truth* sitting as on a Cloud, in one Hand holding a Palm Branch (the Emblem of Victory) in the other the Sun, whose Brightness enlightens the whole Circle of Figures, and is so bright,
that

that it seems to hide the Face of herself, to the Spectators below.

Over the Entrance of the Front of the THEATRE, are Three Figures tumbling down; First *Envy*, with her Snaky Hairs, Squint Eyes, Nag's Breast, pale venomous Complexion, strong but ugly Limbs, and riveled Skin, frighted from above by the Sight of the Shield of *Pallas*, with the *Gorgon's* Head in it, against which she opposes her snaky Tresses, but her fall is so precipitous, that she has no command of her Arms.

Then *Rapine*, with her fiery Eyes, grinning Teeth, sharp Twangs, her Hands imbrued in Blood, holding a bloody Dagger in one Hand, in the other a burning Flambeau; with these Instruments threatening the Destruction of Learning, and all its Habitations, but she is overcome, and prevented, by a *Herculean Genius*, or Power.

Next that is represented brutish, scoffing *Ignorance*, endeavouring to vilify and condemn what she understands not, which is charmed by a *Mercurial Genius* with his *Caduceus*.

In this Theatre are held the Public Acts, called the *Comitia* or *Encænia*: At which solemn Times there are several extraordinary Proctors appointed, who are to take Care that public Peace is observed, and that all Persons are placed according to their Degrees.

When properly filled, the Vice-Chancellor being seated in the Center of the semicircular, Part the Doctors on his Right and Left Hand, the Proctors and Curators in their Robes, the
Masters

Masters of Arts, Bachelors, and Under-Graduates, in their respective Habits and Places, together with Strangers of both Sexes, it makes the most august Appearance of any Room whatever.

The flat Roof is composed of short Pieces of Timber, continued to a great Breadth, without Arch-work or Pillar to support them, being sustained only by the Side-Walls and their own Texture, though from Side-Wall to Side-Wall it is 80 Feet over one Way, and 70 the other; which gave Occasion to say, that the Foundation was on the Roof.

This Edifice, which justly deserves to be deemed one of our principal Curiosities, was built by that celebrated Architect Sir *Christopher Wren*, at the Expence of Arch-bishop *Sheldon*, the Chancellor, A. D. 1669, and cost his Grace no less than 15000*l.* besides which he left 2000*l.* to purchase Lands for the perpetual Repair of it.



F I N I S.

